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You Have to Go to School for That?

by Jerry Seay (Library School Guru)

Our library school guru graduated from the University of South Carolina with a degree in Library and Information Science on December 18, 1991. This article, written just before he graduated, represents his last contribution as a library school student. Sob.

So now I am graduating. In one week, I will have a Master of Library Science degree. I can hardly wait to walk across that stage and receive my golden hair bun and first official pair of sensible shoes. Oh, what a feeling! Of course, like all graduating persons, I will [surely] be asked what great knowledge I have gained. Of course, I will sigh heavily, wrinkle my brow in a librariansque kind of way) and proceed to philosophize on my excruciatingly difficult sojourn through the secret knowledge jungles of library school. Naturally, I have to recount such thoughts here since this is my last article as a library school student.

In fighting my way through these deep jungles, I have discovered one unwavering universal fact: librarians are vastly underrated. This is even more amazing when you realize how lovable most librarians really are. Librarians are true professionals who must know — and know how to do — an incredible amount of stuff. (I know this because of the incredible amount of homework I had to do.) I mention this only for the 98% of the planet's population who really have no idea what a librarian really does.

About four years ago, I was a part of that 98%. I was convinced that librarians spent their days checking out books, collecting overdue fines, reading and contemplating different hair bun arrangements, and all the while sitting in quiet solitude behind those desks with gaping "book return" holes in the front. You can imagine my dismay when I found out what a fun bunch librarians really were. Then I learned that librarians actually got together for conferences. My initial reaction was not unlike my dear brother's when I once tried to tell him about an

ALA conference. "Wow," he had said, "who would want to be in a room with thousands of librarians? I can hear it now, 'checked out any good books lately?'"

Library school and library work have sure changed my perspective. I am now convinced that most librarians do not read too much and are quite interesting when herded together. (My brother, though, is still convinced that I went to school to learn how to check out books.)

Learning cataloging rules, CD-ROMs, online searching, OCLC, reference sources, management techniques, automation, and a tone of other things has given me the basic knowledge I need to start my career in information science. But I must credit the great patience, skill, and good nature of the professors and staff at Davis College (USC) and the staff of the Robert Scott Small Library for helping me to fall in love with this profession. Many folks outside of the information profession may find it hard to understand why anyone would want to spend most of the day in an air-conditioned building dealing intimately with the sum total knowledge of all humankind. Some folks are just funny that way.

I feel like I'm in with a pretty impor-

tant bunch of people. In the book *What Else You Can Do With A Library Degree*, Major Owens writes, "... I have dreamed that a spaceship from some advanced civilization on another planet has landed and that the ship's captain has disembarked uttering the words: 'Take me to your librarian.'" Owens explains that "in future civilizations the word 'librarian' just might become synonymous with the word 'leader' ... because the mounting complexity of modern societies requires the mastery of ever greater amounts of knowledge and information."

Well, I say, "way to go, ET." It is time that librarians get the recognition they deserve. Personally, I'm still waiting for a librarian to be invited on "The David Letterman Show." This would be a true signal that we had "arrived." Until then, just keep watching the skies.

In the meantime, I salute all you vendors, publishers, librarians, and other folks out there in the information profession. I am proud to say that I am now one of you. Kind of scary, huh? I can't wait to start.

Okay, so when do I get to check out the books? ☛

Focus

Review of: *ON TAP: The Guide to U.S. Brewpubs* by Steve Johnson, WBR Publications, Clemson, SC 1991.314 pgs. Review by Mike Markwith (The Faxon Company).

This compilation by ardent beer lover and solid Charleston Conference supporter, Steve Johnson, is not only educational but entertaining. As a primer on beer brewing, the detail is impressive; as a history of the brewpub, the information is both anecdotal and factual; as a travel guide, the information is invaluable. I have visited one of the brewpubs in Oregon and can authenticate Steve's research. Remember, there is beer and there is beer. A very good friend and former colleague of mine responds when someone orders a Budweiser with "I thought you said you were ordering a beer." This handy reference book by Steve Johnson treats the reader to the world of real beer. Finally, with two daughters in college, I know that beer and academia go together and suggest that ON TAP would be a valued and oft used addition to the reference collection in every college or university library. It is relevant! ☛